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Introduction: The Pacific Science Association and the Pacific Circle

IN THE SUMMER OF 1920, Honolulu hosted the first Pan-Pacific Science Conference, drawing a hundred scientists from around the Pacific rim and beyond for 2 weeks of scientific discourse and fellowship. The prime movers of this inaugural event were the colorful, entrepreneurial journalist Alexander Hume Ford and Yale geologist and recently arrived director of the Bishop Museum Herbert E. Gregory. Although a small gathering by recent standards, the success of that conference inspired others to organize a second conference, 3 years later, in Australia.

This Second Pan-Pacific Science Congress was a much more elaborate affair. Beginning in Melbourne and continuing in Sydney, it was attended by 580 scientists representing 16 countries. Sir David Orme Masson, chemist and president of the Australian National Research Council, presided. At the close of the Sydney sessions, T. Wayland Vaughan, newly appointed director of the Scripps Institution for Biological Research, proposed that a permanent organization be established to organize future congresses and to encourage the scientific initiatives they recommended. At the third congress, held in Tokyo in 1926, a constitution was ratified and the Pacific Science Association (PSA) was born.

Three-quarters of a century later, in July 1999, the PSA returned to Australia for the XIXth Pacific Science Congress. As always, its presence afforded a moment to revisit and reassess the circumstances—scientific, political, institutional, and personal—that gave rise to science in the region, from the earliest encounters of Europeans in the Pacific. The PSA has always spoken for science in the broadest sense and has expressed its concern both for the localities in which it has met and for the region as a whole. From the outset, its leaders affirmed the belief that science had a role to play in the protection of island peoples and resources and in the improvement of understanding among nations.

This issue reflects the history of this continuing interest and concern. The following papers were presented to the Congress at a symposium organized by the Pacific Circle. The Pacific Circle was established in 1985 at the XVIIth International Congress of the History of Science and was confirmed as a Scientific Commission of the International Union for the History of Science in 1989. During the last 14 years, the Circle has grown to a membership of over 200 scholars, working from four continents. Through its semiannual *Newsletter* (now in its eighteenth issue) and its successor, the *Pacific Circle Bulletin* (currently in its fourth issue), the Circle has cultivated scholarly interest in the history of science and learning in the Pacific. Its members have contributed to many national, regional, and international conferences and to four major books. These are *Nature in Its Greatest Extent: Western Science in the Pacific,* edited by Roy MacLeod and P. F. Rehbock (University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1988); *Darwin's Laboratory: Evolutionary Theory and Natural History in the Pacific,* edited by Roy MacLeod and P. F. Rehbock (University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1994); and *Science and the Pacific War: Science and Survival in the Pacific 1939–1945,* edited by Roy MacLeod (Kluwer, 1999). A fourth volume is in press: *Oceanographic History: The Pacific and Beyond,* edited by P. F. Rehbock and K. R. Benson (University of Washington Press, Seattle). News of the Pacific Circle and subscriptions to the *Bulletin* may be obtained from Professor P. F. Rehbock at the Department of History, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822 (fax: 808-956-9600; E-mail: frehbock@hawaii.edu).

The new century, it is often said, will be the Pacific Century, and we are indebted to

the editor of *Pacific Science* for this millennial opportunity to contribute a historical section to *Pacific Science.* The Circle's symposium at Sydney was devoted to issues and perspectives in the history of science in the Pacific, ranging from a reconsideration of exploration and the European Enlightenment to a close encounter with colonial natural history. The collection begins with an introductory account of the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Melbourne and Sydney—an event pregnant with implications for scientific developments in the Pacific and Australia—and concludes with a recent study of wartime U.S.–Soviet relations. In its breadth and depth, we hope these papers will stimulate fresh research, further discussion, and many future meetings.

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